Published by the City of Lafayette
Fall 2005
Vol. 15, No.4

LAFAYETTE VISTAS

Is Lafayette Prepared for an Emergency?

Watching the catastrophe in New Orleans unfold, many Lafayette residents — long accustomed to living with the threat of earthquake and wildfire — no doubt wondered: ***What would happen in Lafayette in the event of a major disaster? Are we prepared?***

Certainly, the City would like to answer a resounding "Yes!" to that question. The true answer? It depends. What it depends on is the size of the disaster.

Local Emergencies

The City is a participant in a network of emergency response agencies. This network is very well prepared to handle local emergencies, such as a small wildfire, a hazardous spill that threatens a particular neighborhood, or, as was the case in 1995 — flooded streets. In these types of situations, the City activates its local Emergency Operations Center (EOC), located in the Police Department. The EOC is equipped with extra telephone lines, satellite phones, computers and generators as well as other emergency supplies. The EOC is staffed by City employees and responsible for coordinating rescue efforts which carried out by fire, public works and police personnel. The City will contact the local Red Cross to provide food and temporary shelter if necessary.

Lafayette's employees have been trained for work in the EOC. All of the City's department heads have attended an intensive week-long course taught by the California Specialized Training Institute (CSTI), which is run by the State's Office of Emergency Services (OES). In addition, the City has a comprehensive emergency operations plan and conducts annual drills to practice and refine our response.

The City also has a very active Emergency Preparedness Commission that works closely with staff, police and fire personnel to document emergency procedures, gather supplies, organize volunteers and test disaster plans.

For localized emergencies, we can also call on other jurisdictions for help. There is a statewide mutual aid agreement in which all municipalities and agencies agree to voluntarily aid and assist each other, without charge, when disasters occur. Thus, in events where our own local authorities cannot handle the situation alone, we call upon police, fire, medical, health, communication, and transportation professionals in other communities. One positive outcome of the 1991 Oakland Hills Fire is that the State OES has since worked diligently help jurisdictions communicate with each other and work together efficiently to respond to disasters outside their normal areas of operation. For example, 28 agencies were involved in the Walnut Creek pipeline explosion last year.

Large Scale Disaster

Unfortunately, in the case of a large scale disaster affecting multiple jurisdictions simultaneously — such as a massive earthquake — regional resources will be overwhelmed and help will be limited. With a total of just a few police officers and firefighters on duty at any given time within the City limits, our own resources will be stretched thin. Our personnel will need to work in shifts and some employees may not even be able to reach the city due to downed overpasses or power lines. Therefore, it will be virtually impossible to respond immediately to the tremendous number of calls for service that a large disaster will generate. The first priority will be preservation of lives, and most resources will thus be devoted to search and rescue. Defending personal property, such as extinguishing building fires that don't threaten people, may be secondary.

In the event of a large scale disaster, the state may activate the National Guard. Further escalation might require federal support, including FEMA and the military. However, as we saw in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, such aid will take time to deploy; citizens therefore must take responsibility for their own safety. Residents should thus be prepared to survive for a minimum of 72 hours on their own. Unlike a hurricane, the disasters that are most likely to strike Lafayette — earthquake and fire — will come with little or no warning. This issue of ***Vistas*** is devoted entirely to helping you prepare your family for such an emergency.

INTERNET RESOURCES

It is estimated that only 10-30% of Californians are adequately prepared to sustain themselves for the recommended 72-hour period in the event of an emergency. These websites will help you draft your own disaster plans and organize the supplies you will need.

- **www.redcross.org**
  The American Red Cross has a well organized website with a wealth of information on family disaster planning, animal safety, evacuation methods and disaster supply kits.
- **www.72hours.org**
  Put together by the City of San Francisco, this very concise site is dedicated to helping Bay Area residents make a plan, build a kit and get involved.
- **www.prepare.org**
  This site offers much of the same information as the Red Cross site presented in numerous foreign languages.
- **www.preparenow.org**
  This site specializes in helping vulnerable populations — including seniors and people with physical and mental disabilities — prepare for emergencies.
- **www.abag.ca.gov**
  The Association of Bay Area Governments has maps that predict potential earthquake damage and road closures for different faults. Also included is information on other natural hazards such as fire, floods and landslides as well as a section for kids.

Emergency Quiz

1 *What is the most common disaster that occurs in the USA?*

☐ Fire ☐ Flood ☐ Earthquake ☐ Tornado

2 *People need to be self-sufficient for a minimum of:*

☐ 24 hrs ☐ 48 hrs ☐ 36 hrs ☐ 72 hrs

3 *The first thing you should do in an earthquake is:*

☐ Call Fire or Police ☐ Turn on the radio or TV
☐ Run outside ☐ Duck, cover and hold

4 *The best way to control a stovetop fire is:*

☐ Pour water on it ☐ Use a fire extinguisher
☐ Pick up the pan and take it outside ☐ Put a cover on the pan

5 *You should have a disaster supply kit with sufficient non-perishable food for at least:*

☐ 24 hrs ☐ 3 days ☐ 1 week ☐ 2 weeks

6 *Each member of your household will need how much stored water per day:*

☐ 2 quarts per person ☐ 1 gallon per person
☐ 2 gallons per person ☐ Use other sources of water like water heater

7 *The 4 basic survival essentials of an emergency kit are:*

☐ Water, food, shelter, first aid
☐ Clothing, water, money, protection
☐ Food, money, water, books
☐ Protection, communication, water, shelter

8 *What is the main reason more homes are threatened by wildfires?*

☐ More fires are starting in residential areas
☐ More homes are being built in woodlands
☐ More wood-shingle homes are being built
☐ More outdoor living with camping, BBQs, etc.

9 *If you are caught in a hazardous materials accident and the wind is coming from the accident, you should move:*

☐ Sideways to the wind ☐ Away from the wind
☐ Toward the wind ☐ All of the above

10 *When are you in greatest danger from lightning strikes?*

☐ When you can see the lightning
☐ You feel your hair stand on end
☐ When there is thunder but no rain
☐ You get a tingling feeling

11 *In the event of a fire, before opening a door, you should:*

☐ Check to see if it is locked
☐ Look under the door to see if there are flames
☐ Feel the door for heat. If hot, do NOT open
☐ Open it quickly and run away from the fire

12 *The minimum distance you should stay away from a fallen power line is:*

☐ 10 feet ☐ 20 feet ☐ 30 feet ☐ 50 feet

13 *What should you keep under your bed?*

☐ Fire extinguisher ☐ Shoes and flashlight
☐ Moisturizer ☐ All of the above

Answers on back page

Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)

You can help yourself and your neighbors by getting trained as a **CERT** member. The goal of the program is to have emergency personnel train members of neighborhoods, community organizations and workplace teams in basic response skills. If a disaster overwhelms or delays the community's professional response, CERT members can be integrated into the emergency response capability for their area. CERT skills also apply to daily emergencies. CERT members maintain and refine their skills by participating in exercises and activities.

CERT training will teach participants to:

- Recognize likely hazards
- Take steps to prepare themselves for an emergency
- Work as a team to apply basic fire suppression strategies
- Apply techniques for opening airways, controlling bleeding and treating shock
- Conduct triage, select and set up a treatment area and employ basic treatment for wounds
- Perform light search and rescue

Training is free but participants must be at least 18 years of age and able to commit 20 hours over a 6-week period for training. For more information on classes, please contact the Community Services Officer in the Police Department at 925-299-3220.

Prepare Financially

A disaster can cause significant financial loss. Your home may be severely damaged or destroyed, your income may be cut off or significantly reduced, and your important financial records could be destroyed. *Here are some steps to help prepare financially:*

Protect Your Property

- Install smoke detectors, clear surrounding brush to protect against wildfires, bolt your house to the foundation.

Conduct a Household Inventory

- Make a visual or written record of your possessions (include model and serial numbers). Update your inventory annually and don't leave your only copy at home.
- Photograph the exterior of your home including landscaping, note the quality of building materials. Photograph cars, boats and recreational vehicles.
- Make copies of receipts for expensive items and get professional appraisals of jewelry, artwork and collectibles.

Buy Home Insurance

- Buy full replacement coverage, including the cost of building upgrades. Buy replacement coverage for your possessions.
- Have your home periodically reappraised to be sure the policy reflects the current replacement cost.
- Make sure that your policy will cover the cost of living elsewhere while your home is uninhabitable.

Rent a Safe Deposit Box for:

- Deeds and titles to property and vehicles
- Birth certificates and marriage licenses, wills and trusts
- Passports
- Appraisals and your home inventory
- Negatives for irreplaceable photos

Helping People with Special Needs

Children, disabled individuals and the elderly may need special attention when it comes to preparing for emergencies. *Here are a few tips:*

Children

- Include kids in family discussions about emergency preparedness.
- Prepare an emergency card for each child including their full name, address, phone number, parent's work number and out of state contact; put the card in their backpack.
- Include a family picture and a favorite toy, game or book for each child in their grab-n-go bag.
- Tell small children that they might need to stay at school or at daycare until mom, dad or someone they trust can get them and that it might take a long time.
- Role-play with children so that they know how to remain calm in an emergency.
- Practice basic emergency responses such as evacuation routes, Duck, Cover & Hold and Stop, Drop & Roll.

Disabled & Elderly

- Tell neighbors if a family member cannot move well or quickly in an emergency and make arrangements for someone to check on them.
- Talk with personal attendants and home health care workers about their agency's plan for continued client services in an emergency.
- Try to maintain a 3-day supply of prescription medication.
- For all medical equipment requiring electrical power, such as breathing equipment and infusion pumps, check with the medical supply company about a backup power source.
- Have a manual wheelchair, canes, crutches and walkers as a backup for use in an emergency.

Shelter In Place

The best response to certain kinds of disasters might well be: **stay put.** For example, in the event of a chemical release, or an earthquake in which you are sure that your structure is not damaged or threatened by fire, the County recommends that you **Shelter, Shut and Listen.**

- Stay inside
- Close all windows and secure doors
- Turn off all ventilation systems (air conditioners and heaters)
- Tune an AM radio to KCBS 740
- Stay off the phone

Shelter-In-Place advisories are issued via the news media and the County also has a phone ringdown system that automatically begins calling homes and businesses in the impacted area with pre-recorded instructions about what to do. Even unlisted numbers will be called. You should avoid using the phone and do not call 9-1-1 to get information. Use 9-1-1 only if you need assistance with a life threatening emergency. Overloaded phone systems — including cellular phone calls — can prevent actual emergency calls from getting through.

Grab-n-Go Bag

A Grab-n-Go Bag is for use in the event of an evacuation. Be sure that your bag is easy to carry and that it has an ID tag. Prepare one for each family member. Keep a go-bag at home, at work and in your vehicle.

- Drinking water, ready-to-eat food
- Whistle & flashlight, extra batteries
- Radio — battery operated
- Personal medications, prescriptions, extra eye glasses and hearing aids
- Extra keys to your house and vehicle
- Basic First Aid Kit and instructions
- Walking shoes, warm clothes, hat, rain gear
- Child's go-bag: include a favorite toy, game or book, emergency card with reunification location and out-of-area contact information

72 Hours

After a major disaster, running water, refrigeration and telephones may be unavailable. Experts recommend that you should be self-sufficient for at least three days. **Your 72-hour Kit should include:**

- Drinking water: one gallon per person/pet per day
- Food: ready-to-eat raisins, peanut butter, granola bars, plus pop-top canned items such as tuna, fruit, beans and canned milk
- First Aid Kit: disposable gloves, antibiotic & burn ointment, soap, bandages/sterile dressings, scissors, eye wash, diarrhea medication, prescription medications/medical supplies
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Radio: battery operated, extra batteries
- Cash: small denominations
- Copies of insurance, identification cards and important phone numbers
- Liquid household bleach for water purification
- Personal hygiene items: toilet paper, diapers, feminine supplies and soap
- Sturdy shoes, warm clothes, hat, rain gear
- Heavy gloves, dust mask
- A local map
- Extra prescription eye glasses, hearing aid
- Plastic sheeting, duct tape and utility knife for covering broken windows
- Blanket or sleeping bag
- Extra keys to your house and vehicle
- Large plastic bags for waste and sanitation
- Extra cane or manual wheelchair
- Pets: water, food, leash, veterinary records
- Pocket knife
- Paper, pens and tape for leaving messages
- Recent picture of family members and pets

COMMUNICATIONS
Key in Disaster Preparedness

The key to an organized response to any emergency or disaster is **communication.** Disparate agencies must be able to talk to each other in order to coordinate search and rescue functions and residents must also be able to contact their family members as well as report potentially life-threatening issues to the responding agencies.

While better than they were 10 years ago, intra-agency communication systems still have a lot of room for improvement. For example, in the Bay Area, the Contra Costa County Sherriff's office can't talk directly with Alameda County's office. Although there are some ways to "patch" systems together, it will take millions of dollars to make the improvements necessary for total system compatibility.

Also, while traditional telephone systems are expected to survive a big earthquake and can function on backup power, most calls will probably not go through for the first few hours because the system will undoubtedly be swamped. The same goes for wireless phones, since the towers may topple and cellular networks generally have less capacity than landlines to carry extra calls.

There are some alternatives, however. Lafayette has a group of **Amateur Radio Operators – "hams"** – who are trained for emergency communications. Operating with battery-powered radios from their homes, vehicles, or on foot, they can relay messages to and from the Lafayette Emergency Operations Center and other locations. Furthermore, walkie-talkies can be used for communications between families. These relatively inexpensive radios provide clear, crisp static-free communications for a range of about one-half mile in Lafayette and are available at most consumer electronics and sporting good store for about $30-$70 each.

What you can do:

- Have a least one phone that doesn't need to be plugged in (e.g. not a cordless phone).
- Keep a backup, charged battery for your cell phone.
- Stay off the phone as much as possible to allow emergency calls to go through.
- Use the radio instead of the phone to get information about what is happening.
- Know who your Neighborhood Captains are and where your neighborhood hams are located.

Answers to Emergency Quiz

1. Fire
2. 72 hrs
3. Duck, cover and hold
4. Put a cover on the pan
5. 3 days
6. 1 gallon per person
7. Protection, communication, water, shelter
8. More homes are being built in woodlands
9. Sideways to the wind
10. When there is thunder but no rain
11. Feel the door for heat. If hot, do NOT open
12. 50 feet
13. Shoes and Flashlight

CITY DIRECTORY

For Council Members call: **284-1968**

Council Members

Carl Anduri	**Mayor**
Ivor Samson	**Vice Mayor**
Mike Anderson	**Council Member**
Carol Federighi	**Council Member**
Don Tatzin	**Council Member**

Messages to **all** Council Members:
cityhall@lovelafayette.org

Administration

General Reception and	**284-1968**
Steven Falk, City Manager	**Fax: 284-3169**
Tracy Robinson, Admin. Srv. Dir.	**299-3227**
Gonzalo Silva, Financial Srv. Mgr.	**299-3213**
Joanne Robbins, City Clerk	**299-3210**

Community Development

Ann Merideth, Director	**299-3218**
Tony Coe, Engineering Srv. Mgr.	**284-1951**
Niroop Srivatsa, Planning Srv. Mgr.	**284-1976**
Ron Lefler, Public Works Srv. Mgr.	**299-3214**
P.W. Hotline (to report problems)	**299-3259**

If you observe illegal dumping in creeks & storm drains or accidental spills on roads, call Contra Costa Hazardous Materials Division 646-2286.

Lamorinda School Bus Program

Juliet Hansen, Program Mgr.	**299-3216**
	Or 299-3215

Parks, Trails and Recreation **284-2232**

Jennifer Russell, Director	
Senior Services	**284-5050**
Teen Programs	**284-5815**

Police Services

Emergency: 24 Hours	**911**
Police Dispatch: 24 Hours	**284-5010**
Police Business Office:	**283-3680**

Anonymous Tipline, Traffic Enforcement, Suggestions & LEARN (Laf. Emergency Action Response Network), 299-3232 X 2205

Fax	**284-3169**
Address	**3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. #210, Lafayette, CA 94549**
Website:	**www.ci.lafayette.ca.us**

E-MAIL: Council/staff members can be reached via e-mail using this address format:
First Initial + Last Name @lovelafayette.org
Example: SFalk@lovelafayette.org

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